Financial support to BSNL

3730. SHRI ANAND SHARMA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that BSNL is a commercial enterprise operating on commercial lines; and

(b) if so, why a massive financial support package of Rs. 2700 crores is proposed when the sector is already opened to private, domestic and foreign investment?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD) (a) Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited is a Public Limited Company registered under the Companies Act, 1956 *inter-alia* to carry out the business of providing telecom services in the country.

(b) The underlying principle for providing relief to BSNL from time to time is to ensure that the viability of BSNL is not impaired on account of services provided by it, which are uneconomic but socially desirable. Government had accordingly approved recently reimbursement of Rs. 1408.9 crore to Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) which is 2/3rd of Licence Fee (excluding USO levy) and Spectrum Charges payable by BSNL in the year 2004-05 and reimbursement of backlog of Rs. 591.02 crore on account of shortfall in reimbursement of Licence Fee and Spectrum Charges paid by BSNL for the years 2001-2002 to 2003-04.

Delegation of powers to TRAI

3731. DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that TRAI does not have any power to penalize the cellular services operator in case of deficient service by these operations; and

(b) if so, whether Government are intending to give power to TRAI to deal with cellular operators in case of complaints about deficient service?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) and (b) TRAI is a regulatory body established under the TRAI Act, 1997. Under